4: Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AVI Kashmir
Dard AV3
Chitral

487 492 Still, however bad the track, so long as a man stuck to the riding road he stuck to his horse; nowhere in the world, I should think, do men habitually ride over such awful ground, and yet the Chitrali is no horseman, but then he has no nerves. I used to get off the first few days after leaving Gilgit at particularly vile places, but when I found that this entailed every one doing the same, and that the men of the country would not have thought of dismounting, I saw this would never do, and I put a horseman in front to show the way, and followed till he got off. It was a liberal education, and my heart used to be in my mouth when my inner leg would be brushing the cliff and the outer hanging over eternity. The only time a native ever got off was to use the short cut of a "parri" himself, if it were really a very short distance to walk, and so preferable to the longer riding road, to ascend or descend some obviously impossible rock staircase—they counted about half a dozen of these between Gilgit and Chitral, ordinary mortals would have counted as many hundreds—or to get round some corner where the road ran over polished rock, and where it was considered advisable to hang on to the horse's tail to prevent his quarters going over the edge. I always hated riding over these roads, but it is wonderful what you can do if you make up your mind, and we gave them a most exhaustive and impartial trial.

133 At Chashi the valley opens out, three streams meeting here—one from Yasin to the north, and one from the mountains above Tangir to the south, joining the main valley. Riding up you seemed to

4s Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AV1 Kashmir
Dard AV3
Chitral

men, and this was not to be wondered at, for when we got to our camp, at about four in the afternoon, an icy wind was blowing, and the thermometer was at forty—a few days before at the same time it had stood at a hundred and fifteen in the shade! In the winter the pass is very cold, but generally practicable. We found black-currant bushes on one side of the pass but no fruit.

Afzul-ul-Mulk's Deputy Governor, Abdulla Khan, met us on the Shandur. He was one of the most picturesque of all the Chitrali nobles, and on this occasion was dressed in a loose "choga," a garment cut like a dressing-gown, of gold brocade, covered with a pattern of large tea roses and bouquets of smaller flowers. The Chitrali always wears a small turban; he was no exception, but his was almost entirely gold. His under coat was of the brightest Bokhara silk; his loose bright green velvet breeches were stuffed into long Turkestan riding boots with extravagantly high heels and square toes. He was a great sportsman, and I never saw him without a hawk on his wrist, sometimes the beautiful grey falcon, often a smaller one to kill little birds. He rode a very fast walking horse with brilliantly-decorated saddlery, bits, headstall, stirrups, all heavily plated with silver, and was altogether a pleasure to look upon.

Between the foot of the pass and Mastuj the ground was much the same as before, and I noted a formidable position, which Afzul said was always held against an enemy coming from the south. A few years later it was held by the Chitralis against Kelly's force, which was advancing to the relief of Robertson, who was besieged in Chitral.